

REMARKS

Claims 1-22 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 8, 13 and 17 are amended. Support for the amended claims can be found in the specification at, for example, paragraph [0166]. No new matter is added.

Applicants appreciate the courtesies shown to Applicants' representative by Examiners Wu and Shikhman in the March 31, 2008 personal interview. Applicants' separate record of the substance of the interview is incorporated into the following remarks.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-20 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,887,073 to Fazzari et al. ("Fazzari") in view of Publication "Mixed Raster Content (MRC) Model for Compound Image Compression," by Queiroz et al. (Queiroz), further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,658,136 to Brumitt, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,162,073 to Akgul et al. ("Akgul"). Claim 21 is rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Fazzari in view of Queiroz and Brumitt, further in view of Publication "An Overview of the JPEG 2000 Still Image Compression Standard" by Majid Rabbani. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Independent claims 1, 8, 13 and 17, as amended, recite "wherein image data of the inner blobs that represent background data are merged into the grayscale background plane and inner blobs that do not represent background data are maintained as valid blobs."

As discussed during the March 31 personal interview, Akgul allegedly discloses a method for detecting spot defects on an object using blob analysis. Column 19 of Akgul discloses that "if a blob is topologically enclosed by another blob, then it can be ignored (or merged into the enclosing blob)" (emphasis added).

Even if Akgul discloses merging the data into the greyscale background, as asserted by the Office Action, it does not recite analyzing whether the inner blobs represent background data.

Furthermore, Akgul (and the other applied references) do not disclose that if the inner blobs do not represent background data, they are maintained as valid blobs. To the contrary, detecting spot defects is a binary operation, either the spot is a defect or not. As such, Akgul would have no motive for treating an inner blob as a unique valid blob because a defect surrounded by a larger defect is just a single big defect. Therefore, Akgul does not disclose that "inner blobs that do not represent background data are maintained as valid blobs."

Furthermore, Fazzari, Queiroz and Brumitt fail to cure the deficiencies of Akgul. Accordingly, the applied references, alone or in any combination, fail to teach or provide reasoning to include the recited features of independent claims 1, 8, 13 and 17.

For at least these reasons, independent claims 1, 8, 13 and 17, and the claims dependent therefrom, are patentable over the applied references. Withdrawal of the rejections of the claims is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the pending claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:
Request for Continued Examination

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